

Shrewsbury School Journal

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Superintendent's Corner

The year ahead

BY DR. ANTHONY BENT
SUPERINTENDENT

Welcome back! The 2003-2004 academic year will be eventful from several perspectives and this edition of the *Shrewsbury School Journal* contains articles that detail the upcoming priorities and challenges. This issue should also give you a sense of the vitality of your school district.

Jayne Wilkin, formerly the Assistant Director of Special Education, is now Principal of Paton School. Jayne enjoys the strong support of the people who interacted with her during the interview process and the future for Paton is very bright! Two new assistant principals join the middle school. We welcome Ms. Pamela Farrill, formerly Dean of Students, grades 6-8, in the Littleton Public Schools and Mr. Frederick Randall, formerly Assistant Principal, Overlook Middle School in Ashburnham-Westminster.

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It would not be Shrewsbury if there were no discussion about the increasing student enrollment. We expect to open the school year with 256 new students, bringing our PreK-12 total to 5,574. This represents a 4.8% increase from last year. Despite the ever-increasing enrollment, we have maintained class sizes within school committee guidelines at most grade levels, and the quality of the instructional program remains excellent.

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The article on the Middle School Task Force describes a high priority for us this year. We will reorganize the district in 2004: the elementary schools will house grades 1-4, the current middle school becomes a grade 5-6 school, 45

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Welcome back!

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clip and save

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say hello, say goodbye

War games



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HARLOW FAMILY COLLECTION

A group of Shrewsbury children in 1890 take a pause from reenacting the American Civil War. Born too late for enlistment, they were satisfied to perform Civil War plays for residents and march in parades.

Preschool expansion project nears completion

MARY LAMMI
DIRECTOR OF PARKER ROAD PRESCHOOL

As the director of the Parker Road PreSchool, it is typically around this time that I find myself reflecting on the past school year. Could it be that I've finally allowed myself to look back on what is often a jam-packed school year? Of course, I will always be the first one to say that jam-packing a school year with hundreds of exciting opportunities to teach young children is certainly worth the whirlwind experience. This year was no exception. In fact, I would go so far as to say that this might have been our most exciting year yet.

Over the past few years, I have watched as the numbers and needs of preschool students with disabilities have steadily increased each year. At an annual student growth rate of 13% and the understanding, backed by special education law, that all children with and without disabilities, should learn from and alongside one another, the preschool program found itself literally moving every school year into space that could accommodate its students. I think I speak for each and every staff member when I state that if we never have to pack and unpack another box it will be too soon! Thankfully, the light at the end of the tunnel is as bright as the summer sun.

At the end of school year 2001/2002, an expansion project was approved by town meeting, which has allowed for five classrooms and additional therapy and office space to be added to the Parker Road Preschool facility. This addition, which is on schedule for its summer completion date, will enable all preschool age students with disabilities to attend preschool in their own town, under one roof, with their typically developing peers. With a focus on the annual student growth rate, the expansion project was designed to allow the program to grow into the new and improved facility. For example, we are able to move the preschool classroom that has been temporarily housed at the Spring Street Elementary School to our Parker Road facility for the opening of school in the fall. Space that will be used as a staff work room for the upcoming school year will be a classroom the following year. The project also allows for the Special Education Department to return to the Parker Road facility. After moving to leased office space across town over a year ago to allow the preschool to use the entire Parker Road facility for children, it is a financial benefit and an advantage to our program to have this department join us once again.

With an entire wing being built onto our school and renovations happening all around us, you

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Preschool Expansion, see page 2

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